City Information & Complaints

Overview

Contact

City Information & Complaints Office (DSI)

Email

375 Jackson Street Suite 220 Saint Paul, MN 55101

Ph: (651) 266-8989

Hours

7:30 am - 4:30 pm (Monday - Friday)

Closed Weekends & Holidays

We're a great resource for information on special events happening on the riverfront, in downtown, and in our many neighborhoods. If we don't have the answer, we'll put you in touch with the right people.

The following are frequently asked questions about Saint Paul:

- Report a Problem/Make a Complaint
- What should I do if neighbors are not shoveling their walks? Try this!
- What should I report to the City?
- Why is the City doing this?
- What's on the books?
- How do I file a claim against the City?
- How do I get to Saint Paul City Hall and Ramsey County Courthouse?

SAMPLE 1 – Parks and Recreation: Response to citizen input **Complainaint:**

2/28/07

Linda B. - Sargent Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55105

I have a dog and would like to be able to run my dog off-leash in the mornings before school starts at Groveland. I read in the New York Times that Central Park is open for off-leash use in mornings until 9 am. I cannot believe that New York City would have a more progressive policy than St. Paul parks. This is a good idea for neighborhood safety, as people are outside near places where children are waiting for buses. Also, I offer that I pick up trash while in the parks rather than sending complaints to Parks and Rec.

Finally, I also think that an off-leash dog park should be established at Hidden Falls or Crosby. Currently, I pay \$50 a year to run my dog in Minneapolis at Minnehaha Park. It would much prefer to have a dog park closer to home.

Parks and Recreation Response:

- We are currently evaluating the feasibility of establishing off-leash dog areas at community parks throughout the City. Groveland is one of the sites under evaluation along with Aldine Park, Merriam Park, Mattocks Park and Linwood Park. Other sites may also be evaluated;
- Competing uses: This is an important issue when evaluating whether a community
 park is appropriate for dogs off-leash. Activity often excites dogs which can lead to
 a "free" dog running after or towards an individual who is not prepared to encounter
 a unrestrained dog. Groveland shares is property footprint with an elementary
 school, an active recreation center, a pre-school facility and several multi-use ball
 fields. Add the bus stop to the mix and this may not be a site well suited for dogs offleash at any time;
- Community Input: Part of the evaluation process will include discussions with the community and the willingness to accept a change in the park rules to allow for this type of regulated off-leash dog activity. That process has not yet begun;
- Safety: This can be perceived differently in each situation. Many dog owners feel
 their pet (and the pets of other owners) is non-threatening. However, other park
 users may feel very threatened by dogs off-leash in areas which traditionally have
 not allowed this activity. We also must consider the safety of the animal is the area
 fenced in, is there a lot of traffic surrounding the site, can dogs cause physical harm
 to each other?;
- Hidden Falls/Crosby: The Division of Parks and Recreation is seriously intrigued by the idea of an OLDA in or near the Hidden Falls/Crosby Farm Regional Park. Several areas have been proposed – and have strong potential. But there is significant cost to establishing an OLDA that has sufficient parking, access, fencing and fits within our environmental stewardship principles and meets with community support. We continue to evaluate this possibility;
- OLDA Fee: In 2000, the OLDA task force, a sub-committee of the Parks and Recreation Commission determined that a user fee was not recommended for Saint Paul. This was based on the lack of administrative support to manage the permit system and the lack of sufficient Park Security staff to monitor compliance and ability to issue citations for noncompliance. In addition, there is a prevailing principle that citizens should be allowed free access to all Saint Paul parks – and this type of user fee may prevent some citizens from being able to afford this recreation activity.

The permit or user fee structure is also being re-evaluated to determine its feasibility and community support.

Sample 2 – 2/11/09

Complainant

Geoffrey S.

Dear Ann Mulholland.

I've lived in the Twin Cities all my life, and enjoyed what makes these cities unique--the parks and lakes inside city limits. I've also hiked one of the best nature parks in the cities for decades, Crosby Park, nearly every day. My concern is that in the last 9 months, Crosby has been 'discovered', and is now in danger of losing what makes it special. It is being used as a 'dog run' by many of its patrons. Meaning, most people now no longer leash their dogs, and most never pick up dog feces.

This scares the precious wildlife out of the park, leaves the trails a mess, and often I'm confronted with either a lost dog, or a barking dog running up to my legs. I'd like the Mayor's Office to support Park Security, which has been scaled back to the point where no one is patrolling Crosby. Everyone I know who uses the park, has similar concerns.

I'd like to hear the Mayor's position on having Park Security have enough support to be able to patrol the park in peak usage hours to eliminate this problem, which is always worse on weekends, sunny days, and all summer.

Thank you for your time.

Prepared Response by Eric Thompson for Deputy Mayor Mullholland

Dear Mr. S.:

Thank you for taking the time to share your experiences and observations about the number of dogs off leash at Crosby Farm Park. This is truly one of the most common violations of our City's park rules and regulations.

After talking with folks from our Parks and Recreation Department, it is clear to me that our Park Security Officers are aware of this problem and they are working hard to both deter the activity and issue citations to those who violate the ordinance.

In 2006 Park Security Officers were given the authority to issue citations for violations of the leash law. Eric Thompson is the supervisor of the program, and he says that his officers issued 55 citations for dogs off-leash in 2008 and 27 of those were for violations in Crosby Farm Park. They also issued 320 warnings, with 183 of them in Crosby.

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Park Security Officers are patrolling many of our park areas – including Crosby Farm Park on a regular basis. At certain times of the year, staff is assigned specifically to do leash law enforcement. Typically, that occurs in the spring and summer – but Mr. Thompson assures me that he will have Park Security Officers increase their presence at Crosby to the best of their ability and issue citations appropriately.

Mayor Coleman is committed to having safe parks, and Park Security Officers will always be an integral component of providing that service. Please feel free to contact Eric Thompson directly at 651-755-5665 if you have any further questions or comments about your experiences at Crosby Farm Park

Citizens can contact Eric Thompson, park security program manager with any questions, comments or suggestions. 651-632-2415 (office), 651-755-5661 (cell) or via e-mail at eric.thompson@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Or send comments to parksecurity@ci.stpaul.mn.us

There will always be citizens who are opposed to any park areas being used for off-leash recreation. The question is...how can this committee help Parks and Recreation change the perceptions of off-leash recreation?

What are the "real" issues vs. the perceived issues? What PR strategies can/should implemented to help?